

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CHARTER REVISION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 14, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Cathleen Simpson, Chair; George Estrada, Vice Chair; Harry Weichsel, Charles Valentino; Rev. William Marshall, Ruben Felipe (10:40 a.m.)

STAFF: Atty. Steven Mednick; Atty. Ed Maley, Atty. Mark Anastasi

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Simpson called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m.

Atty. Mednick said that the discussion would be focused on Boards and Commissions. He said that he broke it into sub parts in terms of the various actions for the City Council. Atty. Mednick then reviewed the details of these items.

The discussion moved to conflicts of interest and Council Members who are City of Bridgeport employees voting on the budget. It was pointed out that this issue was already addressed in the Charter, but it was also noted that the State statute would supercede the issue of prohibiting a City employee from holding a seat on the City Council.

Atty. Mednick said that it would be very important to insure than every Commission and Board that was mentioned in the Charter is governed by the Charter regarding recusals, governance, auditing, etc.

The Commission then moved to Section 6, where a number of items regarding the City Council were compiled. The discussion moved to the codification of the ordinances. Atty. Anastasi said that there had been some concerns about allowing Council Committees to have some oversight, such as the Miscellaneous Matters asking for updating on current legal cases underway, or the Public Safety requesting a meeting with the Chief of Police for an update on issues. Currently, the Committees can only have items on the agenda that have been referred by the Council. Atty. Mednick pointed out that this would be an oversight function as opposed to an action that requires a vote.

Emergency procedures covered by extraordinary conditions such as where there was a situation that could not be referred to committee due to time constraints was the next topic discussed. Atty. Anastasi asked about the public hearing requirements. Discussion followed.

Atty. Maley distributed a clean, updated version of Section 8, which focuses on the City Council Districts. Discussion followed about the various State deadlines for various issues such as the impact of the census on the Town Committees when districts are redrawn.

The Committee then discussed whether it would be possible compile a list of items that the Charter Revision was considering for the City Council. There will be a meeting with the City Council at 11 a.m. in two weeks as working session and a progress report for them. Discussion followed.

Atty. Mednick said that he would be happy to prepare an outline of the changes that had already been considered.

Commissioner Estrada said that it would important to address having minority representation on the City Council and to open the process a bit for representation. Commissioner Simpson reminded everyone that when an election was held, people vote for the people they wish to have in the office. The minority representation rule could circumvent this. Atty. Maley said that to the best of his knowledge, the councils that are elected by district are exempt from minority representation rules. The minority representation rule usually comes into play in the municipalities where the council is an at large system. Discussion followed.

Rev. Marshall left the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

A discussion then followed about the terms for the Town Clerk and City Clerk followed. It was determined that the terms had been changed in 1999. The previous discussion was focused on the possible consolidation of the two offices, which is not something the Commissioners felt was should be tabled at this time.

Mr. Felipe joined the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Concerns about delays in the appointments and re-appointment to Boards and Commission were the next item that was discussed. It was pointed out that all Boards and Commissions are responsible for reporting to the City, which includes financial reporting.

The discussion then moved to the use of electronic notification and the details of publishing notices. Atty. Mednick directed everyone's attention to page 5 of the working draft that includes this.

Commissioner Felipe then said that the administration was stymied by the long period of time involved in having a candidate for the Boards and Commissions undergo a background check. Atty. Anastasi then suggested a few alternative methods for handling

this Atty. Mednick said that Bridgeport has the strictest standard in the State. Commissioner Felipe pointed out that the standard for Board and Commission appointment exceeded that which a City employee undergoes. This is covered in the ordinances and this may need to be reconsidered by others.

Commissioner Estrada said that the Commission had received a letter from David Walker, who is a resident of Bridgeport, regarding a short presentation on finances that he wished to make to the Commission. Discussion followed regarding whether or not the Commission wished to have a fact finding issue on finances.

Commissioner Simpson asked where Tuesday's public hearing would be held at 5:30 p.m. The Thursday meeting will at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER ESTRADA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSIONER WEICHSEL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services